

# HERE'S WHAT WENT DOWN AT #TANYAKP 2.0

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LAST Friday, **Kelab Seni Filem Malaysia** and the **National Film Development Corporation Malaysia (FINAS)** held their second installment of *TanyaKP* with FINAS Director General, **Dato' Kamil Othman**.

The question and answer session — held at **Content Malaysia Pitching Centre**, Platinum Sentral — is one of FINAS's initiatives in giving members of the public and the film community a chance to interact with the KP (an abbreviation of *ketua pengarah*) himself in a no-holds-barred session.

During his opening speech, Dato' Kamil touched upon the challenges in local filmmaking. He brought up the fact that Malaysian audiences are drawn to watch films of their preferred genre most of the time, and commented on last year's industry performance — 81 films were released in 2015, one of which was the record-breaking *Polis EVO*.

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## Trade association tensions

When concerns regarding trade associations in the film industry were brought up, tensions rose between those who supported and opposed such bodies. Though association representatives insist they exist to uphold the rights of guild members, critics on the floor claimed that these organisations have not been focusing on the welfare of its members, especially with regards to matters from basic wage to insurance coverage.

Dato' Kamil then pointed out that although FINAS oversees such associations in the film industry, issues pertaining members and constitutional matters are not within FINAS's jurisdiction.

This however had audiences questioning policies like *Padu Citra*, which requires industry practitioners to be a member of certain guilds in order to score employment on commercial productions. Many argued that forcing creatives to be attached to organisations like the **Film Directors' Association of Malaysia (FDAM)** and **Persatuan Seniman Malaysia (SENIMAN)** before they can be hired effectively restricts them from attaining maximum exposure and employment opportunity.

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Censorship stays... for now.

Local censorship was also probed during the session, although Dato' Kamil reaffirmed that content creators should try and work around the **Film Censorship Board (LPF)**'s restrictions. Audiences also learned that FINAS's stance in censorship is hard to align with LPF's policies as both agencies are under different ministries.

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### **Local Films, International Festivals**

It was brought to attention that there have been examples of local works selected for international festivals or competitions but fail to appear on FINAS's radar. The KP then called on producers and filmmakers to provide information on local titles which have not been listed by FINAS but are making the rounds internationally, so FINAS can eliminate funding problems on helping these films travel.

He also informed attendees that FINAS is still figuring out a framework to choose local titles in representing Malaysia to achieve its target: having a Best Foreign Language Film entry at the **Academy Awards**. He further justified this year's choice of *Lelaki Harapan Dunia* as our Oscar candidate — **Liew Seng Tat**'s film was recognized in last year's **Festival Filem Malaysia**, making it an easy choice for the selection committee.

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### **Pitch perfect**

The KP underlined the importance of the Content Malaysia Pitching Center, which allows filmmakers to pitch their ideas straight to potential collaborators and producers. The process is a way to get local filmmakers the grants they need. It's also the place to be for those seeking opportunities for more local co-productions in the near future. This falls under the supervision of the **Creative Content Industry Guild of Malaysia (CCIG)**.

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### **Giving local films a fighting chance**

During this edition of *TanyaKP*, Dato' Kamil mulled over the possibility of developing a physical space dedicated to local films. This "national cinema" could give homegrown features more time on screens, as well as allow producers to screen their content more affordably. This method could potentially help local producers avoid costly exhibition fees and entertainment taxes.

Another proposed solution was to have a permanent slot in a local broadcasting network so local films could be showcased on a weekly basis, thus exposing the masses to local content.